IN THE CLAIMS:

The status of the claims is as follows:

1. (currently amended) A fibrous composite article comprising fibrous material having an average fiber length of less than about 2 millimeters (mm) and a cured, **thermosetting** binder resin **selected from the group consisting of amino resins, modified amino resins, phenolic resins, modified phenolic resins, and mixtures thereof**, wherein the fibrous material comprises a species selected from the group consisting of hemp hurd, kenaf hurd, vegetable bamboo culms, and mixtures thereof, the article having a density of at least about 45 lb/ft^3.

2. (original) The article of claim 1 comprising fibrous material having an average fiber length of about 0.3 mm to about 1.6 mm and said binder resin, is present in an amount of about 2 wt.% to about 8 wt.%, based on the weight of the fibrous material prior to cure.

3. (original) The article of claim 1, wherein the fibrous material has a specific gravity of about 1 to about 1.2.

4. (canceled)

5. (original) The article of claim 1, wherein the fibrous material has a pre-consolidation moisture content of about 3 wt.% to about 5 wt.%.

6. (original) The article of claim 1, wherein the fibrous material has a pre-consolidation moisture content of about 4 wt.% to about 4.5 wt.%.

7. (original) The article of claim 1, further comprising a sizing agent in an amount of about 1 wt.% to about 3 wt.%, based on the weight of the fibrous material prior to cure.

8. (original) The article of claim 1, further comprising a sizing agent in an amount of about 1.5 wt.% to about 2.5 wt.%, based on the weight of the fibrous material prior to cure.

9. (original) The article of claim 2, wherein the fibrous material comprises hemp hurd and the fibers have an average fiber length of about 0.5 mm to about 0.75 mm and the article contains the cured, binder resin in an amount of about 4 wt.% to about 6 wt.%, based on the weight of the fibrous material prior to cure.

10. (original) The article of claim 9 having a smoothness value of about 2.1 to about 3.8.

11. (original) The article of claim 9 having an internal bond strength of about 140 pounds per square inch (psi) to about 250 psi.

12. (original) The article of claim 9 having a cleavage value of about 45 pounds to about 65 pounds.

13. (original) The article of claim 2, wherein the fibrous material comprise kenaf hurd and the fibers have an average fiber length of about 0.5 mm to about 0.75 mm and the article contains the cured, binder resin in an amount of about 4 wt.% to about 6 wt.%, based on the weight of the fibrous material prior to cure.

14. (original) The article of claim 13 having a smoothness value of about 2 to about 5.

15. (original) The article of claim 14 having a smoothness value of about 2.5 to about 4.2.

16. (original) The article of claim 13 having an internal bond strength of about 210 psi to about 290 psi.

17. (original) The article of claim 16 having an internal bond strength of about 218 psi to about 279 psi.

18. (original) The article of claim 13 having a cleavage value of about 82 pounds to about 100 pounds.

19. (original) The article of claim 18 having a cleavage value of about 82 pounds to about 95.7 pounds.

20. (original) The article of claim 13 further comprising a wood species selected from the group consisting of aspen, birch, hackberry, fir, hickory, maple, mulberry, oak, pine, and sycamore.

21. (original) The article of claim 20 wherein the wood species is present in a wood species:kenaf weight ratio of about 0.25:1 to about 0.67:1.

22. (original) The article of claim 2, wherein the fibrous material comprises culms of a species of vegetable bamboo selected from the group consisting of high-node (*Phyllostachys promineus*), thunder (*P. praecox f. prevenalis*) red (*P. iridescens*), and mixtures thereof.

23. (original) The article of claim 22, wherein the fibrous material has an average fiber length of about 0.5 mm to about 0.75 mm and the article contains the cured, thermosetting binder resin in an amount of about 4 wt.% to about 6 wt.%, based on the weight of the fibrous material prior to cure.

24. (original) The article of claim 22 having a smoothness value of about 2 to about 9.

25. (original) The article of claim 24 having a smoothness value of about 2 to about 4.2.

26. (original) The article of claim 22 having an internal bond strength of about 160 psi to about 400 psi.

27. (original) The article of claim 26 having an internal bond strength of about 180 psi to about 375 psi.

28. (original) The article of claim 27 having an internal bond strength of about 225 psi to about 375 psi.

29. (original) The article of claim 22 having a cleavage value of about 65 to about 95.

30. (original) The article of claim 29 having a cleavage value of about 67.2 to about 92.5.

31. (withdrawn) A method of making a fibrous composite article, the method comprising the steps of:

    a) providing fibers comprising a species selected from the group consisting of hemp hurd, kenaf hurd, vegetable bamboo culms, and mixtures thereof;

    b) refining the fibers;

c) combining the fibers with a binder resin;

d) forming a mat comprising the fibers and binder resin; and

e) consolidating the mat under heat and pressure to produce a fibrous composite article.

32. (withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein step (c) further comprises combining the refined fibers and binder resin with a sizing agent and, step (d) further comprises forming a mat comprising the fibers, binder resin, and sizing agent.

33. (withdrawn) The method of claim 32, wherein the fibers are refined to an average fiber length of about 0.1 mm to about 2 mm.

34. (withdrawn) The method of claim 32 wherein the fibers have a specific gravity of abut 1 to about 1.2.

35. (withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein the binder resin is a thermosetting binder resin selected from the group consisting of amino resins, modified amino resins, phenolic resins, modified phenolic resins, and mixtures thereof.

36. (withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein the fibers have a preconsolidation moisture content of about 3 wt.% to about 5 wt.%.

37. (withdrawn) The method of claim 35, wherein the fibers have a preconsolidation moisture content of about 4 wt.% to about 4.5 wt.%.

38. (withdrawn) The method of claim 32, wherein the sizing agent is a wax present in an amount of about 1 wt.% to about 3 wt.%, based on the weight of the fibers prior to cure.

39. (withdrawn) The method of claim 38, wherein the wax is present in an amount of about 1.5 wt.% to about 2.5 wt.%, based on the weight of the fibers prior to cure.

40. (withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein the consolidation step includes a press temperature of about 375° F to about 450° F.

41. (withdrawn) The method of claim 40, wherein the press temperature is about 400° F to about 425° F.

42. (withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein the fiber comprises a hemp hurd fiber.

43. (withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein the fiber comprises a kenaf hurd fiber and the consolidation step comprises a three-stage press cycle of about 60 seconds to about 90 seconds, wherein a first stage includes a press cycle time of about 10 seconds to about 20 seconds, a second stage includes a press cycle time

of about 30 seconds to about 40 seconds, and a third stage includes a press cycle time of about 20 seconds to about 30 seconds.

44. (withdrawn) The method of claim 43, wherein the consolidation step comprises a three-stage press cycle of about 70 seconds to about 80 seconds.

45. (withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein the fiber comprises a fiber of vegetable bamboo culms.

46. (withdrawn) The method of claim 45, wherein the fiber comprises a fiber of a culm of a vegetable bamboo species selected from the group consisting of high-node (*Phyllostachys promineus*), thunder (*P. praecox f. prevenalis*), red (*P. iridescens*), and mixtures thereof.

47. (withdrawn) The method of claim 45, wherein the consolidation step comprises:

a) a first press period having a press cycle time of about 20 seconds to about 30 seconds;

b) a breathing period, having a cycle time of 10 seconds to about 15 seconds; and,

c) a second press period, having a press cycle time of about 35 seconds to about 75 seconds.

48. (withdrawn) The method of claim 47, wherein said first and second press periods utilize a pressure in a range of about 700 psi to about 1200 psi.

49. (withdrawn) The method of claim 48, wherein the pressure is in a range of about 800 psi to 1100 psi.

50. (previously presented) A fibrous composite article comprising fibrous material having an average fiber length of about 0.3 mm to about 1.6 mm, and a binder resin in an amount of about 2 wt. % to about 8 wt. % based on the weight of the fibrous material prior to cure, wherein the fibrous material comprises culms of a species of vegetable bamboo selected from the group consisting of high-node (*Phyllostachys promineus*), thunder (*P. praecox f. prevenalis*) red (*P. iridescens*), and mixtures thereof.

51. (previously presented) The article of claim 50 having a smoothness value of about 2 to about 9.

52. (previously presented) The article of claim 50 having an internal bond strength of about 160 psi to about 400 psi.

53. (previously presented) The article of claim 50 having a cleavage value of about 65 to about 95.

54. (previously presented) A fibrous composite article comprising fibrous material having an average fiber length of about 0.5 mm to about 0.75 mm, and a binder resin in an amount of about 4 wt. % to about 6 wt. % based on the weight of the fibrous material prior to cure, wherein the fibrous material comprises kenaf hurd, said article further comprising a wood species selected from the group consisting of aspen, birch, hackberry, fir, hickory, maple, mulberry, oak, pine, and sycamore.

55. (previously presented) The article of claim 54 wherein the wood species is present in a wood species:kenaf weight ratio of about 0.25:1 to about 0.67:1.